

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

(MORNING, EVENING AND SUNDAY.)
OWNED AND ISSUED BY
THE WASHINGTON TIMES COMPANY.
TIMES BUILDING,
SOUTHWEST CORNER PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
AND TENTH STREET.
Telephone—Editorial Rooms, 188.
Business Office, 337.
Price—Morning or Evening Edition, One Cent.
Sunday Edition, Three Cents.
Monthly, by Carrier—
Morning and Sunday, Thirty-five Cents.
Evening, Thirty Cents.
Morning, Evening and Sunday, Fifty Cents.

BY MAIL, POSTAGE PREPAID.
Morning, Evening and Sunday, 50c.
Morning and Sunday, 35c.
Evening and Sunday, 35c.

The Times has a regular and permanent family circulation much greater than any other paper, morning or evening, published in Washington. As a News and Advertising Medium it has no competitor.

WASHINGTON, D. C. DECEMBER 19, 1896.

CHRISTMAS

AND

THE POOR.

At no time of the year does the knowledge of the presence of poverty in the community become so oppressive as about Christmas. The prevailing joyousness of the season accentuates even more strongly than usual the misery of the poor, and almost causes a condition of self-reproach for being more than ordinarily merry when so many are more than ordinarily sad. It is all the more distressing, therefore, to know that the destitution and poverty in Washington are much greater now than they were at this time last year, and that extraordinary exertions must be made to relieve them. Fortunately the weather has so far been sufficiently mild not to visit all the discomforts and privations of winter upon the poor, but a day may change this and bring hundreds face to face with conditions that are simply appalling. In many a home today the larder is empty and there are no means to replenish it; it needs but the cold blast to blow through poorly constructed houses and scantily furnished, fireless rooms to reduce the wretched inhabitants to the last degree of misery. Even this is added to here and there by the presence of sickness.

The picture is not a pleasant one to contemplate. It calls for action to relieve it of some of its somberness. There is work to do in order to shed brightness upon dark places, to alleviate suffering, to change the tears of woe and the sigh of despair into the smile of relief. There are thousands of our people who will only be too glad to contribute their share to improve the condition of the poor, and to make them feel that at this season, more than at any other time, they and their needs are not forgotten. Of all occasions, this is the one when their lot should be lightened and a part of the burden that rests upon them taken off their shoulders by those who are able to do so. All can help. None need be a millionaire to do so. The smallest gift will carry comfort to some one, because it will form a part of the great stream of charity that pours its tide through the arid places of poverty.

Care should be taken, however, in the distribution. Impostors are alive to the opportunities at such a time as this, and circumspection is necessary lest some deserving one may be made to suffer because an unworthy individual has been assisted. It is best to distribute one's bounty through the channel of regularly organized charities who are familiar with the situation and know best where help is most urgently required.

The announcement of the death of Capt. George E. Lemon falls with a great shock upon his friends and the community. Though it was known that his health had recently not been of the best and that this fact had induced him to seek the genial climate of California in the hope of deriving benefit from the change, none of all of death so soon and so sudden. Capt. Lemon was widely known on two continents as a man of affairs. Here in Washington he was identified with important interests, and his immense pension business made his name familiar to thousands all over the country. He was a man of liberal disposition, a true friend, and of strict integrity in all his relations. He will be mourned by hundreds of friends, but by none more sincerely than by the thousands of old veterans in whose behalf he never tired of rendering service.

The co-operative or profit-sharing method of employing workmen has been tried with gratifying success in many commercial and industrial establishments in this country, but the Illinois Central Railroad Company is probably the first common carrier that will try the experiment. This great corporation, whose system of railways is among the largest in the country, and whose securities are regarded as gilt-edged, is about to make an attempt to attach its employees to itself through the strong ties of self-interest. It is proposed to make an issue of stock, to which each employee shall have a right to subscribe, shares to be paid for in small monthly installments, and the employee's money, pending full payment for each share, to bear interest at the rate of 4 per cent per annum. Thus from the very start the investment will be a paying one for the employee, the interest paid him being the same as given by reliable savings banks. When the stock is paid for in full, the employee will share in the dividends.

There can hardly be a doubt but that this scheme will commend itself to the favorable consideration of all classes of employees on that road, because it affords them the very best opportunity for a safe and profitable investment of their savings. On the other hand, the company makes itself measurably secure against strikes and the possible incidental destruction of its property, in which, by the proposed plan, every employee would have a direct and personal interest. Differences which might arise between the company and its men on the questions of wages or hours of labor would be much more readily adjusted, because of this community of interests. There may be in this undertaking of the Illinois Central Company the germ of a solution of the great labor problems of the day. Its successful issue may furnish the common ground upon which capital and labor can meet to arrange amicably whatever differences arise in the ordinary course of their mutual relation. One of the happy results of such an outcome might be the elimination of the professional labor agitator, the man who finds his reckoning only in the stirring up of strife and dissension between the employers and employees, and whose sole mission is to create dissatisfaction with existing conditions. All railroad companies, of course, are not in a condition to make such favorable offers to their employees, because their financial status is not such as to make a tender in their securities specially acceptable. The principle, however, can be practically applied in some way to all railroads and other large employers with probably satisfactory results.

Mr. Olney makes it clear to Congress that this government is a limited monarchy, and that the House of Cleveland will attend to all international questions. Minister Canovas declines those friendly offices before they are formally tendered. Mr. Olney is against "precipitate action" when the subject is Spain or trusts. Under the pure food law of Pennsylvania, four cases have been tried in Philadelphia during the present week, and in each one the accused was convicted, and had to pay a fine. The defense, of course, was ignorance of the law and of the fact also that the article sold was adulterated. The judge, very properly, ruled that ignorance of law is no excuse for a violation of it, and, further, that the merchant must be held responsible for the quality of the merchandise he offers for sale. If a milk dealer, for instance, sell milk which has been diluted with water, he can prosecute the dairymaid that sold it to him; or if a grocer sells as olive oil a substance which turns out to be cotton-seed oil, he should proceed by criminal and civil process against the parties from whom he bought it. The suspicion is warranted that the adulteration of the ordinary food articles is only too common, those especially that are most frequently bought by persons with small means and in small stores, to which these people are attracted by advertisements of cheap prices. It is an evil, therefore, which can be checked, if not entirely suppressed, only by stringent legislation. No community should be without the protection of a pure food law, for, properly framed and strictly enforced, it will eventually lessen not only the sale, but the manufacture, of adulterated articles. If a dealer knows that the plea of being ignorant of the spurious character of his wares will not avail him, he will be more circumspect in the selection of his stock of goods. By a parity of reasoning, the manufacturer, finding that he can secure no market for adulterated articles, will turn his attention to the production of pure substances. White beans roasted will no longer pass current as coffee, nor colored plaster of paris as black pepper; and will not be as much in demand for mixing with sugar; it may be possible that when olive oil is asked for the purchaser will get it instead of cotton-seed oil, and that skim milk will no longer masquerade as cream.

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General Weyler begins to appreciate the fact that a dead lion is frequently mightier than a live jackass.—Boston Herald.

Boston wall paper manufacturers have formed a trust. Theirs is about the only line of business which succeeds best by going to the wall.—Chicago Times Herald.

There is a general feeling that McKinley is entitled to the privilege of being allowed to take his seat as President before a war is forced upon his hands.—Commercial Advertiser.

The electrocution of the man-eating elephant in Chicago has been postponed, thus presenting an opportunity for an expert to declare that she is an epidemic of the physical type.—Detroit Free Press.

It is said the census to be taken in Russia next year will be the first in over forty years and may be put down as another evidence that Russia intends to be included hereafter among the nations that count.—San Francisco Call.

There may be a few soreheads in Canada, but those who know the Canadian people best know that they are as loyal to the queen as are the people of London. What is more, the United States people, by 50,000,000 majority, have no desire that it should be otherwise.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Beloit College Professor Chosen. Beloit, Wis., Dec. 19.—Dr. G. A. Tawney, a graduate of Princeton University, has been secured by Beloit College to take the place of the late Prof. Blaisdell in the chair of mental and moral philosophy.

Assaulted and Benten. Lieut. Ames reported to headquarters today that about 12:10 this morning Benjamin Bryan was assaulted and severely beaten by two men, on D street, between Ninth and Tenth streets northwest. He was taken to the Emergency Hospital, and Frank Sturgess and George F. Sullivan, while men, were arrested on suspicion of being the assailants.

District Committee Closed. Chairman Pabcock, of the District Committee, will leave for Springfield, Mo., today. He will not return till after the holiday recess, which, under a pending resolution, will last till January 5. During that time the District Committee room will be closed so far as any business with the committee is concerned.

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City Brevities

The United States Coast Survey schooner Matrosia lying at the navy yard. Continental Chapter, D. A. R., will hold a meeting at the Elmsire next Monday evening.

Huge cupolas for smelting purposes have been placed in the new reconstruction shop at the navy yard.

W. Owen Jones of Lincoln, Neb., managing editor of the Nebraska State Journal, is at the Raleigh.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cranford have moved to their new residence, No. 1532 Park street. Mr. Cranford is a resident of St. Louis.

R. Trigg, president of the Richmond Locomotive and Machine Works, is registered at the Metropolitan.

A new searchlight was tested on the dispatch boat Dolphin last night. It is of exceptional power and brilliancy.

Ex-Mexican Minister Thomas Ryan of Kansas City, Mo., who has been in the city for the past few days, left for his home last night.

The Blue training class at the Central Union Mission tomorrow afternoon will be conducted by Mr. Allen Wood. The topic will be "Prayer."

A competitive examination for the position of assistant physician at the Columbia Hospital will be held at the hospital on January 5 next.

Many friends of the late Mrs. Juliana Miller, of No. 830 Sixth street northwest, attended her funeral at 9:30 o'clock this morning from St. Mary's Church.

Secretary Williams, of the excise board, who recently sustained a fracture of an ankle bone by accident, has so far recovered as to be able to walk about his house on crutches.

Large business firms are employing private detectives to guard their customers during the holiday rush, also to protect their stocks from the ravages of petty shoplifters.

The only arrests made in the entire southeastern corner of the city during the twenty-four hours ended at 9 o'clock this morning were three young white men—plain drunks.

Ernest Goetz, leader of the East End Glue Club, was fined \$10 for obstructing traffic by standing over a sidewalk obstruction and falling heavily to the pavement.

An appeal is to be made to the Secretary of the Interior in the pension case of Mrs. Sallie Kibbutz, widow of the late John Kibbutz, of this city, a veteran of Company A, Twenty-second United States Infantry.

The high fence which formerly surrounded the old Capital Baseball Park, on North Capitol street, has been torn down. It is understood that a new street will be run through the reservation and many houses erected thereon in the spring.

The Wisconsin Republican Association in this city has elected officers for the ensuing year as follows: B. W. Halmon, President; B. W. Halmon, Vice President; A. H. Frier, Second Vice President; O. W. Goodwin, Secretary; F. H. Allen, Treasurer.

Two new marble altars, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Danziger, of this city, will be consecrated at the Georgetown Catholic Chapel next Monday morning at 5:30 o'clock. Rev. A. J. Ryan, pastor of the church, will officiate at the ceremony.

Robert S. Richardson, formerly a clerk in the Adjutant General's Office, died last Wednesday morning of a heart attack. He was 64 years of age and had been in the service of the government for 18 years.

Rev. Dr. Newman, pastor of the First Congregational Church, has invited the board of directors of the Central Union Mission to present the work of this Christian organization to his congregation during the 11 o'clock service tomorrow.

The latest turn in the electric lighting contest between the United States and the Potomac Companies is a resolution introduced in the Senate by Mr. Gallinger. It directs that no new permits for additional connections for electric service until such a time as Congress shall have investigated the controversy and agreed upon a solution of it.

Rev. Randolph H. McKim, rector of Epiphany Church, has prepared a minute regarding the death of Rev. William H. Laird, late a member of the standing committee of the diocese of Washington, which will be spread upon the records of the committee. The tribute is signed by John H. Elliott, president; Dr. McKim, J. Bancroft Davis, C. H. Stanley, and others.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union will discuss the subject of "Home drinking during the holidays" at Foundry M. E. Church tomorrow at 8 o'clock p. m. The speakers will be Mrs. E. Rogers of the Church of Our Father; Rev. C. W. Pate, of North Capitol M. E. Church; Hon. Elijah Morse, and Mrs. S. H. Martin. Elocution will be given by Mrs. M. B. Platt, president, and Mrs. E. F. Shelton, recording secretary of the District W. C. T. U., and a solo will be rendered by Mrs. F. J. Power.

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The Lounge.

J. L. PATTERSON, of Winston, N. C., one of the leading politicians of his State, is registered at the Metropolitan.

With regard to the Senatorial contest now being waged in his State, Mr. Patterson says that there is scarcely any doubt of the ultimate election of Pritchard. This will be accomplished, in his opinion, by a fusion of Republicans and Populists.

Pritchard's most bitter antagonist is Senator Marion Butler, who is supporting the Populist Gutherie for the office. The outcome of this struggle, in the opinion of Mr. Patterson means a great deal more than the election of a Senator to succeed Senator Butler. Upon it depends, in a great measure, the success of the Populists to remain at the head of his party or not.

If the Populists in his own State can be controlled by him and made to vote for Gutherie it will show that his influence in his party is undiminished, but if they refuse to do this, and persist in electing the Republican name, it will be a sign of a tendency on the part of the Populists to repudiate his leadership. And such an opening, said Mr. Patterson, will not be allowed to grow smaller through lack of effort on the part of Tom Watson.

A LEADING thinker on the currency question, in the person of William L. Royall, editorial writer of the Richmond Times, is a guest at the National.

Mr. Royall is in Washington in response to an invitation from the House Committee on Currency and Banking, who wish him to give them his views upon the subject. He met the committee at 10 o'clock this morning. Mr. Royall maintains that the key to the money question lies in neither silver nor gold, but in the repeal of the 10 per cent tax on the currency issue of State banks.

There is no doubt, he says, that the one great need of the farmer is an expansion of the currency and the fact that this extra circulation is tied up by the 10 per cent tax is slowly strangling our agricultural interests. The repeal of this onerous measure, therefore, was asked for in his paper this morning; but, he says, he has very little hope that the committee will adopt his suggestion.

LL railroad people, says Robert A. Chadwell, a prominent Chicagoan, who is a guest at the Rheumai, are watching with special interest a plan recently adopted by the Illinois Central road, by which they hope to put an end to, or at any rate to diminish, the loss of time and money in the handling of their freight cars.

On the first day of each month the company will quote to its employees a price at which their applications for shares of stock will be accepted. As soon as a share has been taken, the employee will be transferred to the company's books and the owner is entitled not only to a share of the dividends, but also to a vote in the election of the board of directors. Any employee making payments on the installment plan will be entitled on his deposit of 4 per cent to receive a certificate for the same amount. Payments may be stopped at any time, whereupon the money, with accrued interest, will be refunded.

The success of this plan, Mr. Chadwell thinks, depends upon the number of employees who will take advantage of this offer. If the number is large, the plan will be successful, for the company can depend upon those who have invested in stock to influence their fellows, but if only a few purchase it will only make matters worse by causing dissension among the men.

CITY HALL GOSSIP. Judge Hagner, of equity court No. 2, is very careful that the delicate sensibilities of ladies are not shocked by offensive and vulgar testimony, which frequently has to be read in open court.

Very recently there was illustrated in the hearing of evidence in the Cast divorce case. With a lady client, Mr. W. Preston Williamson came into Judge Hagner's courtroom during recess. He secured an order from the court, and seated himself to await his writing by the clerk.

Means in the lawyers of the Cast case were preparing to begin. Judge Hagner noticed the lady, however, and before the reading commenced, he looked in her direction, saying as he did so, "Is there anyone more I can do for you, Mr. Williamson?"

The lawyer was ignorant of the case in hand and of the nature of the evidence, but the look of the court was sufficient intimation of its character, and the lady was ushered out of the courtroom.

"Now, you can proceed," was what Judge Hagner said when they were gone.

A good story is being told about the City Hall regarding a former judge of the District courts. He was very nervous and excitable, and laid much stress upon the respect due the court by removal of the hat in its presence.

On one occasion, when the courtroom was pretty well crowded, the judge seated a hat which was still on his own head.

Surprised and indignant, his honor summoned the bailiff and said: "Make that man do what he is sworn to do."

The bailiff hastened in the direction indicated, but his puzzled countenance showed that he had failed to locate the offender.

"There he is," indicated the court, as he pointed to a crowd closely packed to gether. In vain did the court officer scan the audience.

"That man there—the one with the brown fedora. Bring him up here; I will teach him not to disrespect the court."

Seeing the brown fedora, the bailiff hastened to take the wearer into custody, but for some unaccountable reason returned to the bench without the culprit.

He was with difficulty suppressing an inclination to burst into laughter. He whispered in the ear of his honor: "It is no man, sir; it is a new woman."

Then, rushing into the corridor, the bailiff shook with laughter at the joke on the court.

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MAY EXPLAIN A MYSTERY

Serious Charges Made Against an Oyster Sloop Captain.

One of His Crew on the Way to Baltimore to Report to the Authorities.

Anthony John, a little German, as queer as his name and bearing many marks of ill-usage, called at Senator Officer Frank's room at police headquarters today and told a harrowing story, which will be investigated by the Maryland and Virginia authorities.

John was an oyster dredger on the lower Potomac until Thursday, when he was put ashore, penniless and half-died, by the captain of the schooner he was employed on. If the German's story is true, and it is possible that it is, it is a case of the most serious nature from Virginia officials, two mysterious deaths on the lower river will be accounted for.

John is forty-three years old, and hails from Lebanon county, Pa. Several weeks ago he shipped at Baltimore on the oyster dredging schooner Stevenson, Capt. Jackson Hall, of Chesterfield. He claims that while on the vessel he was treated with great brutality, and on one occasion the captain, at the point of a revolver, made him sign a receipt in full for the wages due him. On another occasion, he says, Capt. Hall fired the pistol at him, the bullet grazing his flesh.

Several days ago two strange men were received on the schooner and one night they mysteriously disappeared after the captain had threatened them. The next day the body of a dead man, said to be one of the missing two, was washed ashore at Upper Machodoc creek, and was buried by the Virginia authorities.

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